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The President's Daily Brief

28 February 1970

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50X1

~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

28 February 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[redacted] 50X1

In Laos, the Communists are beginning to probe the approaches to General Vang Pao's base at Long Tieng. *(Page 2)*

Guatemala's foreign minister has been kidnaped, apparently by one of the country's several Communist groups. *(Page 3)*

[redacted] 50X1

50X1

Negotiations for a new center-left government in Italy are now faltering over the issue of relations with the Vatican. *(Page 5)*

[redacted] 50X1

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ISRAEL-EGYPT

50X1

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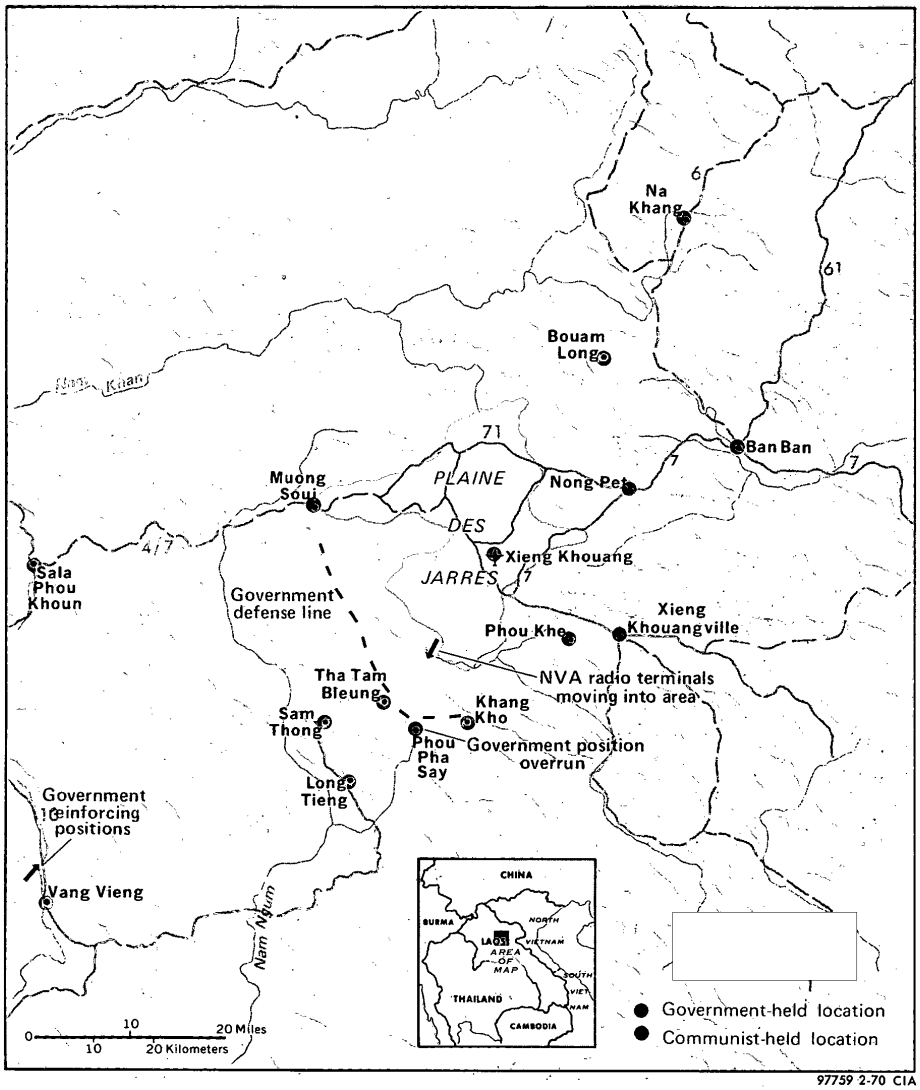
New Communist Activity South of the Plaine



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LAOS

The Communists are beginning to probe government positions south of the Plaine des Jarres. Early yesterday an enemy force overran a lightly defended mountain outpost about ten miles from Long Tieng. General Vang Pao is now moving troops in to retake the post. Only a handful of enemy troops are still on the summit.

> *There are as yet too few Communist troops south of the Plaine to mount a major attack on Long Tieng or the outposts guarding its approaches.* [redacted] 50X1
> [redacted] 50X1
> [redacted] *the current probing activity is probably the first step in a larger effort against Long Tieng.* 50X1

In Vientiane, Prime Minister Souvanna is putting pressure on his generals in south Laos to provide reinforcements for the fighting in the north. He has managed to extract promises of some troops to strengthen defenses north of Vang Vieng, but these forces are neither numerous enough nor are they of the calibre to do much good.

Souvanna is also trying to get the conflict back into the diplomatic arena. He has called publicly on the signatories of the 1962 Geneva Accords to reconvene, although he has not yet issued a formal request to the cochairmen--the UK and the USSR.

[redacted] 50X1
[redacted] 50X1

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GUATEMALA

Members of the Cuban-oriented Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) claim to be holding Foreign Minister Fuentes Mohr, who has been missing since his departure from a meeting with OAS election observers last night. The FAR told several radio stations that Mohr will be killed unless a student arrested by the government is released within 24 hours.

This seems to be part of a last-minute Communist effort to disrupt the general elections scheduled for tomorrow. [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

50X1

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USSR-FEDAYEEN

50X1

50X1

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ITALY

Our embassy in Rome reports that the attempts of the four center-left parties to form a coalition are now faltering over the issue of relations with the Vatican. The trouble started when the Vatican recently issued a diplomatic note of protest against pending Italian divorce legislation. The Socialists, Unitary Socialists, and Republicans have called on the caretaker Christian Democratic government to reject the note. Prime Minister Rumor has made no move to do so, and a member of his staff reports that Rumor is discouraged over prospects for forming a new government.

A bill permitting divorce passed the lower house last year. Before the Vatican's intervention, the question of upper house action on the bill had not been considered an important hurdle for the current negotiations. Even if this difficulty is overcome, other sticky issues will need to be resolved, including the question of amnesty for those charged with illegal acts during the 1969 strikes, economic policy, and extending the policy of center-left cooperation to local governments.

President Saragat has the constitutional power to call early national elections, but it is unlikely that he would exercise it except as a last resort and after repeated failures to find a successor government.

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NOTES

USSR - Middle East: Moscow is pressing its efforts to dissuade the US from giving Israel more military aircraft. First Secretary Makarov of the Soviets' London embassy, citing a recent CBS news report that Washington would do so, told an American embassy officer on Thursday that this was a serious matter and that the Soviets would give the US a "beating." Makarov, who is known for floating trial balloons, said the US decision left Moscow no alternative but to supply "more sophisticated equipment" to the other side. He added that since the Arabs are not qualified to use such equipment, "other arrangements would have to be made." A Pravda article the same day echoed Makarov's warnings.

North Vietnam: [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

50X1

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